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“SEEING THROUGH THE ‘MIST’ (minor impact soft tissue injury)?”

This was the title of an editorial which appeared in the Summer 2005 issue of *Pain Research Management*, a peer reviewed medical journal listed in Index Medicus. The author was Eldon Tunks, M.D., F.R.C.P.C. It is a commentary on the Centano article which appeared in the same issue and which was reviewed in *MedicoLegal News* in the July 27, 2005 edition. Key comments include the following:

“The authors noted that the hypothesis that the severity of the crash should determine the severity of injury has not been supported by crash studies. They point out that studies dealing with simulated crash data and real-world crash data from ‘black boxes’ installed in vehicles have found that Delta V, or the change in velocity during crashes, does not bear a consistent or expected relationship to injuries, and low-damage accidents can be accompanied by occupant injury. The relationship between accident severity and occupant injury is determined by interactions between the overall energy of the accident, the stiffness and elasticity of the vehicles, seat design, head restraint, occupant mass and position, vehicle design with crumple zones, and other factors such as the addition of a tow hitch and whether the occupant is male or female.”

“There are various lines of evidence that call the assumption of trivial soft tissue injury into question. In their extensive narrative review, Barnsley et al (1) compiled evidence that whiplash accidents are associated in some cases with damage to the zygapophyseal joints, intervertebral disk avulsion, tear of the anterior annulus fibrosus and anterior longitudinal ligament, and accelerated onset of degenerative changes in the cervical spine.”

“There is reasonable doubt about the validity of equating ‘whiplash-associated disorder’ with ‘MIST’. For the sake of our patients and the integrity of our science, we as clinicians, independent medical consultants and clinical investigators must take account of the emerging evidence in this field.”

For a free copy of this editorial, and the previous Centano article, please send an email request to aimmerman1@cox.net. These articles are the strongest ammunition for the truth that we have seen in the literature for many years.

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